

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY / MIDDLE EAST UPDATE
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1. [Clinton Urges Negotiators to Adopt Nuclear Materials Treaty](#) (03-03-2011)

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton called for the Conference on Disarmament to move ahead quickly on a proposed treaty that would ban the production of nuclear-weapons-usable fissile materials.

“Halting production is in the interest of every country, and I urge this conference to end the stalemate and open negotiations on a Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty without further delay,” [Clinton said in a speech](#) before the 65-nation, Geneva-based conference February 28.

“The United States is deeply committed to reducing nuclear weapons and the risk of nuclear proliferation. Our long-term goal, our vision, is a world without nuclear weapons,” Clinton said.

President Obama announced during [a speech in Prague](#) April 5, 2009, that he would work to rid the world of nuclear weapons. Since then the United States has redefined its use of nuclear weapons in its national defense; convened a 47-nation Nuclear Security Summit in Washington and agreed to lock down vulnerable nuclear materials over a four-year period; ratified the U.S.-Russia arms cut treaty (New START) to reduce nuclear arsenals to their lowest levels since the 1950s; and joined

with other member nations in the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty to strengthen one of the world's oldest nonproliferation initiatives.

"We should continue to advance nuclear security by turning now to the negotiation of a verifiable ban on fissile-material production for bombs," Clinton said.

The fissile material treaty was first proposed in 1993 by then-President Bill Clinton in an address to the U.N. General Assembly. According to the Federation of American Scientists, the treaty "would strengthen nuclear nonproliferation norms by adding a binding international commitment to existing constraints on nuclear-weapons-usable fissile material."

Fissile materials used in nuclear bomb production include highly enriched uranium and plutonium. The proposed treaty, which has been under discussion at the Conference on Disarmament, would prohibit further production of these materials for nuclear weapons and other explosive devices.

A concern of the United States and most other nations is that nuclear bomb-making materials could fall into the hands of terrorist groups or extremists, threatening regional and global security.

"If we are serious about reducing the possibility that fissile material could fall into terrorists' hands, then we must reduce the amount of such material that is available," Clinton told the delegates. "For that reason, the United States also supports reducing stocks of separated plutonium and highly enriched uranium and minimizing the future use of highly enriched uranium for civilian purposes."

Clinton said the United States and Russia have made significant progress toward those goals, and will continue to make them a focus of U.S. nuclear diplomacy.

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon encouraged the conference on February 24 to "move ahead vigorously" on the fissile material treaty or risk slipping into irrelevance. Work has been stalled at the conference on the treaty because of objections by one or more nations over terms contained in the treaty.

The 65-member Conference on Disarmament was established in 1979 to focus on the cessation of the nuclear arms race and promote nuclear weapons disarmament, prevention of nuclear war, and the prevention of a nuclear arms race in space.

2. U.S., Partners Airlift People Fleeing Libyan Violence (03-03-2011)

By Charlene Porter
Staff Writer

Washington — The United States is boosting its effort to help people displaced from Libya find their way home. President Obama announced March 3 that U.S. planes will fly Egyptian citizens home from Tunisia, where they fled to escape weeks of violence in neighboring Libya.

"I've authorized the U.S. Agency for International Development to charter additional civilian aircraft to help people from other countries find their way home," Obama said. "And we're supporting the efforts of international organizations to evacuate people as well."

Obama made the announcement as an internationally backed airlift began, with more than 50 flights carrying migrant workers home. At the same time, a tent city sprang up in Tunisia's barren

borderlands as relief agencies worked to provide shelter for tens of thousands fleeing unrest in Libya.

Egypt, France, Italy and the United Kingdom all contributed to the airlift, working with the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Earlier in the week, UNHCR implored the international community to provide more transportation home for an estimated 180,000 foreign workers who feel threatened in Libya and want to leave.

Obama emphasized the ongoing U.S. commitment to that effort, but also underscored what must be the final outcome to this mounting crisis.

“The violence must stop. Muammar Qadhafi has lost legitimacy to lead, and he must leave,” Obama said.

Tunisian, Egyptian and foreign workers from sub-Saharan Africa and East Asia are dashing to borders on both the east and west of Libya, fleeing a three-week rebellion that has met violent retaliation from the Qadhafi government.

IOM began overland evacuations of migrants out of the Libyan port city of Benghazi on March 3. The first evacuees were about 200 migrants, described by IOM as women, children and those in need of medical assistance.

IOM estimates some 5,500 foreign workers remain in Benghazi alone, with perhaps thousands more elsewhere in Libya, fearful they may be targeted if they attempt to reach the border for evacuation to their home countries.

The U.N. General Assembly voted March 1 to suspend Libya from the Human Rights Council because of the government’s retaliatory actions. After the vote, [U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said](#), “The international community is speaking with one voice and our message is unmistakable: These violations of universal rights are unacceptable and will not be tolerated.”

The U.S. State Department’s Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration has contributed \$2 million to the IOM assistance efforts. The U.S. Agency for International Development has pledged \$10 million to assist the victims of the violence and the United Nations is tapping its Central Emergency Response Fund for \$5 million to scale up humanitarian efforts on the Libyan-Tunisian border.

3. Clinton Urges Congress to Approve Obama’s Budget (03-01-2011)

By MacKenzie C. Babb
Staff Writer

Washington — Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton urged Congress to approve President Obama’s budget request for the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development, and warned that cutting funding could harm key investments in countries across the Middle East.

“The entire region is changing, and a strong and strategic American response is essential,” Clinton said in testimony March 1 to the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee.

Although Committee Chairwoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen emphasized in her opening remarks the need for the United States to “maintain firm ties” with its allies, she has supported budget cuts for federal agencies including the State Department. Clinton said the proposed cuts, included in a House bill passed in February, “would be devastating to our national security.”

The secretary defended the \$47 billion core request, calling it a “lean budget for lean times.” She added that, if approved, the budget “will allow us to keep pressing ahead” on “missions vital to our national security.”

She said U.S. involvement in the Middle East is critical to both regional and global security.

“The entire region is changing, and a strong and strategic American response is essential. In the years ahead, Libya could become a peaceful democracy, or it could face protracted civil war, or it could descend into chaos. The stakes are high,” Clinton said.

In Libya, she said, USAID has provided food and medical supplies and is set to dispatch two expert humanitarian aid teams to help people moving into Tunisia and Egypt to flee the violence.

She called the U.S. response to widespread unrest in the Middle East an “unfolding example of how we use the combined assets of smart power — diplomacy, development and defense — to protect Americans’ security and advance our values.”

“This integrated approach is not just how we respond to the crisis of the moment. It is the most effective — and cost-effective — way to sustain and advance our security across the world. And it is only possible with a budget that supports all the tools in our national security arsenal,” Clinton said.

The secretary said during the past two years, investments in development and diplomacy have led to tangible returns for U.S. national security.

“In Iraq, almost 100,000 troops have come home and civilians are poised to keep the peace. In Afghanistan, integrated military and civilian surges have helped set the stage for our diplomatic surge to support Afghan-led reconciliation that can end the conflict and put al-Qaida on the run,” Clinton said, adding that the United States has also “imposed the toughest-ever sanctions to rein in Iran’s nuclear ambitions.”

She underscored the State Department’s ongoing work “to open political systems, economies and societies at a remarkable moment in the history of the Middle East and to support peaceful, orderly, irreversible democratic transitions in Egypt and Tunisia.”

Clinton said the State Department budget has strengthened U.S. alliances and partnerships, and that across the board, leaders are working to ensure “all who share the benefits of our spending also share the burdens of addressing common challenges.”

She said among the top budget priorities are key investments in international human security, global health programs and worldwide food security, and she highlighted the importance of funding to maintain diplomatic ties with 190 nations around the world.

4. North Korea's Activities at "Center" of U.S.-China Relationship (03-01-2011)

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington — Senior State Department officials say China and the United States share the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons from the Korean Peninsula and that both countries will need to work together and with partners in East Asia to resolve North Korea's status as a nuclear weapons state.

Special Representative for North Korea Policy Stephen Bosworth told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee March 1 that nuclear activity by North Korea "is an issue which is at the very center of the U.S.-China relationship."

He acknowledged that China's concern over stability in North Korea sometimes creates "understandable tensions" with its desire to eliminate nuclear weapons on the peninsula.

But neither country wants "to see North Korea as a nuclear weapon state on an ongoing basis," Bosworth said, and each has "a major stake in demonstrating that, working together with our other partners in the region, we can solve this problem or at least manage this problem over the longer term because ... in some sense it is a litmus test to the ability of the United States and China to work together on broader issues."

Bosworth described North Korea as "a pole of instability in the heart of what is arguably the most important economic region of the world today," and said its activities pose "an enduring challenge" to the interests of its neighbors, as well as the United States.

"This is a challenge that must be dealt with," he said. "We do not have the option, in my judgment, of simply biding our time and ignoring them."

The Obama administration is pursuing a two-track policy of working with the international community to tighten economic sanctions targeting North Korea's leadership and its nuclear and ballistic missile programs, while also remaining open to "constructive dialogue," he said.

"We view diplomacy ultimately as the best way of solving these difficulties and this challenge," he said, but the United States is looking for evidence that North Korea is prepared to carry out commitments it has already agreed to, such as its September 2005 agreement with South Korea, Japan, Russia, China and the United States to [abandon its nuclear programs](#).

"It's very difficult to go forward with confidence and make new agreements if they are not able to adhere to the ones that we've already put in place," Bosworth said.

He also said the Obama administration has repeatedly told North Korea that while the United States believes that a change in its regime's behavior is "necessary to any fundamental improvement in the overall relationship" between the two countries, "regime change is not the objective" of U.S. policy.

"It may be that they don't believe us or that they don't fully trust us, but I don't think they should be operating under the fear that somehow we are dedicated and determined to undermine the regime," he said.

Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Kurt Campbell told the Senate panel that the United States is determined to “break the cycle” of North Korea’s provocations, which threaten both regional and global security.

In his testimony, Campbell recalled North Korea’s March 2010 [sinking of the South Korean naval vessel Cheonan](#), its November 2010 [artillery shelling of Yeonpyeong Island](#), its November 2010 disclosure of a [uranium enrichment program](#), as well as its ongoing nuclear and ballistic missile programs and its human rights violations.

“Despite the tremendous opportunities that we see in Asia that have become part of our popular discourse, one country indeed stands out as an outlier and in fact an impediment to the region’s promising future: the DPRK, North Korea,” he said.

Campbell said the United States is “committed to addressing these issues through an active and determined diplomacy using all elements of our policy at our disposal with all the parties involved.”

He said many countries that previously had never been involved with efforts to stop illegal cargo shipments from North Korea to Asian and Middle Eastern countries are now assisting the United States in turning back shipments.

“We’ve also been able to target some specific entities that are involved in providing hard currency to elite groups around the leadership. And our evidence suggests that, in fact, many of these efforts do indeed bite and have created some difficulties overall for the leadership,” he said.

Through United Nations Security Council resolutions 1718 and 1824, as well as unilateral sanctions imposed by the United States and other countries, North Korea “is probably the most heavily sanctioned country in the world,” Campbell said, and the Obama administration will continue to urge its partners in the region to robustly enforce measures designed to make it more difficult for North Korea to pursue illegal activities.

5. U.N. Unanimously Votes to Suspend Libya from Human Rights Council (03-01-2011)

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington — All 192 member nations of the United Nations General Assembly have voted to suspend Libya from the U.N. Human Rights Council due to its government’s violent attacks on protesters opposed to Muammar Qadhafi’s rule.

Speaking in New York March 1, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations Susan Rice described the vote as “unprecedented” and “a harsh rebuke — but one that Libya’s leaders have brought down upon themselves.”

Libya was elected to the 47-member council in May 2010. The final tally of the vote on the resolution calling for its suspension far exceeded the two-thirds majority that was required to approve it.

The United States was a co-sponsor of the resolution. Rice said the General Assembly’s action sends “another clear warning to Mr. Qadhafi and those who still stand by him” that they “must stop the killing” in Libya.

“When the only way a leader can cling to power is by grossly and systematically violating his own people’s human rights, he has lost any legitimacy to rule. He must go, and he must go now,” Rice said.

Rice applauded the U.N. body for its “historic decision,” and said it had acted “in the noblest traditions of the United Nations.”

“Membership on the Human Rights Council should be earned through respect for human rights, and not accorded to those who abuse them,” Rice said.

The resolution followed passage of a measure by the Geneva-based council on February 25 that recommended Libya’s suspension due to its “gross and systematic violations of human rights.” The Human Rights Council also called for the dispatch of “an independent, international commission of inquiry” to investigate alleged human rights violations.

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton had urged the General Assembly to vote to suspend Libya in [her February 28 remarks](#) to the council, saying “Governments that turn their guns on their own people have no place in this chamber.”

During the council’s February 25 session, U.S. Ambassador Eileen Chamberlain Donahoe said Libya’s continued participation in the body “[undermines the core mission of the council](#) and its mandate and goals.”

[6. Clinton Condemns Libyan Violence, Calls for Accountability \(02-28-2011\)](#)

By MacKenzie C. Babb
Staff Writer

Washington — Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton called for Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi to be held accountable for opening fire on peaceful protesters and other violent acts that “violate international legal obligations and common decency.”

In [remarks to the U.N. Human Rights Council](#) in Geneva February 28, Clinton said Qadhafi’s security forces have used “heavy weapons on unarmed civilians,” and that “mercenaries and thugs have been turned loose to attack demonstrators.”

“There are reports of soldiers executed for refusing to turn their guns on their fellow citizens, of indiscriminate killings, arbitrary arrests and torture,” she said.

Libya has been seized with civil strife that began with a nonviolent revolt against the government February 15. Now most of the eastern half of the North African nation is under the control of rebelling Libyans, and street fighting has spread to the borders of the Libyan capital, Tripoli.

Clinton commended the February 25 decision by the Human Rights Council to establish an independent commission of inquiry on the situation in Libya and praised the unanimous February 26 [decision by the U.N. Security Council to adopt a resolution](#) “imposing an arms embargo on Libya, freezing the assets of key human rights violators ... and referring the Libyan case to the

International Criminal Court.” She also applauded the Arab League for being the first multilateral organization to suspend Libya’s membership.

“The international community is speaking with one voice, and our message is unmistakable. These violations of universal rights are unacceptable and will not be tolerated,” Clinton said.

She called for the U.N. General Assembly to vote March 1 to accept the recommendation to suspend the Qadhafi government’s participation in the Human Rights Council. The secretary said the United States has imposed travel restrictions and financial sanctions on Qadhafi, his family and senior Libyan officials. She said the United States and its allies have joined the United Nations, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent and other nongovernmental organizations to set up a “robust humanitarian response” to the crisis.

“We all need to work together on further steps to hold the Qadhafi government accountable, provide humanitarian assistance to those in need, and support the Libyan people as they pursue a transition to democracy,” Clinton said.

She called on leaders in Libya and across the Middle East to hold free and fair elections, to cultivate a vibrant civil society that can hold the government accountable, and to make economic opportunity available to all.

“Without meaningful steps toward representative, accountable and transparent governance and open economies, the gap between people and their leaders will only grow, and instability will only deepen,” Clinton said.

She added that, ultimately, it will be the people of Libya who chart their own destiny and shape their new government, and she repeated the U.S. commitment to support the citizens and governments of the region “as they work for progress.”

7. Obama Calls for Libya’s Qadhafi to Leave Power Now (02-27-2011)

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — President Obama calls on Libya’s leader, Muammar Qadhafi, to leave power now, saying that he and his government must be held accountable for violating the human rights and brutalization of the Libyan people.

In speaking with German Chancellor Angela Merkel on February 26, Obama shared his deep concern about the Libyan government’s continued violation of human rights and brutal treatment of the Libyan people and said the use of violence against the Libyan people calls into question the legitimacy of Qadhafi’s rule, [the White House said](#).

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton further amplified the president’s position, saying that it is clear the Libyan people want Qadhafi out of power.

“We have always said that the Qadhafi government’s future is a matter for the Libyan people to decide, and they have made themselves clear,” [Clinton said February 26](#). “When a leader’s only means of staying in power is to use mass violence against his own people, he has lost the legitimacy to rule and needs to do what is right for his country by leaving now.”

“Qadhafi has lost the confidence of his people and he should go without further bloodshed and violence,” she added.

It is the first time that Obama administration officials have directly called on Qadhafi to step down from his 42 years in power. The call comes as [the United States has imposed new financial and travel sanctions](#) on Qadhafi, his regime and his family along with 10 of his closest supporters and associates.

Libya has been seized with civil strife that began with a nonviolent revolt against the government on February 15. Now most of the eastern half of the North African nation, which faces the Mediterranean Sea and is bordered by Tunisia and Egypt, is under control of rebelling Libyans, but street fighting and protests have spread to the borders of the Libyan capital city, Tripoli.

[Clinton is leaving on February 27 for Geneva](#), where she will confer with foreign ministers from the European Union, Russia and other powers — including envoys from Arab and African nations — on further actions. She will make a speech February 28 before the U.N. Human Rights Council on the worsening crisis in Libya and status of its government. It will be the first time that a U.S. secretary of state has addressed the Human Rights Council.

Before leaving for Geneva, Clinton also held consultations by telephone with EU High Representative Catherine Ashton and other European allies.

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon will visit the White House February 28 for talks with Obama. [Obama also spoke with French President Nicolas Sarkozy](#) and other leaders during the day on February 25.

[Obama told reporters February 25](#) that the “Libyan government’s continued violation of human rights, brutalization of its people, and outrageous threats have rightly drawn the strong and broad condemnation of the international community.”

The United States has imposed specific visa bans on senior Libyan officials and their families and will reject any new visa applications from them. A freeze has been imposed on all Libyan assets in the United States that belong to Qadhafi, his government, four children and associates. The United States has also closed its embassy in Tripoli and suspended some limited defense trade between the two nations.

Obama said that the United States “will stand steadfastly with the Libyan people in their demand for universal rights, and a government that is responsive to their aspirations. Their human dignity cannot be denied.”

U.N. SANCTIONS

The U.N. Security Council voted 15-0 on February 26 to impose political and financial sanctions on Qadhafi, his supporters and his government in a move intended to impose immediate measures to stop the violence, ensure accountability and provide humanitarian assistance to the Libyan people.

Additionally, [the U.N. Security Council measure](#) is the first unanimous resolution that refers the case of “heinous human rights violations to the International Criminal Court,” says U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Susan Rice.

“It’s very significant that the council has acted so swiftly, and in unanimity around what are some outrageous and heinous crimes that are being committed by the government of Libya against its own people,” [Rice told reporters following the Security Council action](#). “Those who slaughter civilians will be held personally accountable.”

The U.N. sanctions also impose a strong arms embargo and takes steps against the use of mercenaries by the Libyan government to attack its own people, Rice told reporters.

[8. Fact Sheet: U.N. Security Council Resolution on Libya Sanctions \(02-26-2011\)](#)

Fact Sheet: UN Security Council Resolution 1970, Libya Sanctions

The UN Security Council has adopted a comprehensive resolution to respond to the outrageous violence perpetrated by Muammar Qadafi on the Libyan people. This resolution imposes immediate measures to stop the violence, ensure accountability and facilitate humanitarian aid.

The Security Council has demanded an end to the violence and urged Libyan authorities to respect human rights, ensure the safety of foreign nationals allow the safe passage of humanitarian supplies and lift restrictions on all forms of media. Significantly, the resolution:

1) Refers the situation to the International Criminal Court (ICC)

- The Security Council referral gives the ICC jurisdiction over crimes committed in Libya after February 15, the day of the first protests in Benghazi. The ICC may investigate crimes including war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.
- A referral the ICC is necessary because Libya is not a party to the ICC Rome Statute.
- The ICC Prosecutor will report regularly to the Security Council.

2) Imposes an arms embargo and other arms restrictions

- All states are prohibited to provide any kind of arms to Libya.
- All states are prohibited from allowing the transit to Libya of mercenaries.
- Libya is prohibited from exporting any arms to any other state.
- States are called upon to inspect suspicious cargo that may contain arms. When such arms are found, states are required to seize and dispose of them.
- All states are called on to strongly discourage their nationals from traveling to Libya to contribute to human rights violations.

3) Imposes targeted sanctions on key regime figures

- Seventeen Qadafi loyalists are subject to an international travel ban.
- Six of these individuals, including Qadafi himself and his immediate family members, are also subject to a freeze of their assets. The Security Council commits to ensure that any frozen assets will be made available to benefit the people of Libya.
- A Sanctions Committee is established to impose targeted sanctions on additional individuals and entities who commit serious human rights abuses, including ordering attacks and aerial bombardments on civilian populations or facilities.

4) Provides for humanitarian assistance

- All states are called upon to work together to facilitate humanitarian assistance and support the return of humanitarian agencies.
- The Security Council expresses its readiness to consider additional measures to achieve the delivery of such assistance.

5) Commits to review the measures

- The Security Council will keep these sanctions under review and strengthen, modify or lift them in light of the situation.
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